

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01701 150945Z

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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O 150912Z APR 77 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3672

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1701

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC LE PLO

SUBJ: SECURITY CONTACTS WITH PLO

REF: (A) BEIRUT 1660, (B) STATE 083729

1. RSO MET WITH PLO SECURITY CONTACT ABU JAAFAR AND REPRESENTATIVE OF ABU IYAD AT 2000 ON APR 14 AT PLO OFFICE IN BEIRUT. UPON ARRIVAL RSO WAS INFORMED THAT MELOY VEHICLE, WHICH NOW COULD BE DRIVEN, WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO RSO. IT WAS EXPLAINED TO RSO THAT REASON FOR POSTPONEMENT OF MEETING WAS TO MINIMIZE PROBLEMS OF DRIVING VEHICLE THROUGH THE CITY DURING PEAK TRAFFIC HOURS.

2. VEHICLE WAS DRIVEN TO CHANCERY BY PLO REPRESENTATIVE, FOLLOWED BY RSO. UPON ARRIVAL AT CHANCERY PLO REMOVED "THEIR" BATTERY AND VEHICLE WAS PLACED IN CHANCERY BASEMENT.

3. INITIAL INSPECTION BY RSO INDICATES THAT VEHICLE IS ESSENTIALLY IN SAME CONDITION AS WHEN SEEN IN JUL 76 AND ONLY MAJOR CHANGE IS WORK DONE ON IGNITION SYSTEM IN ORDER TO "HOT WIRE" VEHICLE FOR STARTING PURPOSES.

4. THERE ARE PRESENTLY AT POST TWO CEO-R TECHNICIANS WHO HAVE BEEN DIRECTED BY RSO TO COMPLETE INSPECTION OF
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RADIO SYSTEMS TO DETERMINE WHAT HAS BEEN REMOVED AND WHAT, IF ANYTHING, REMAINS OF RADIO EQUIPMENT. THIS REPORT WILL FOLLOW BY SEPTTEL UPON COMPLETION OF INSPECTION.

5. MECHANICALLY, THE VEHICLE RUNS AND THERE WAS NO DIFFICULTY IN DRIVING FROM PLO OFFICE TO CHANCERY. NO

EXPLANATION WAS OFFERED FOR EARLIER STATEMENTS THAT VEHICLE WAS NOT OPERABLE. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO MAJOR CHANGE, EXTENSIVE REPAIRS WILL BE REQUIRED TO PUT VEHICLE BACK IN SHAPE. IF VEHICLE IS TO REMAIN AT POST, SUGGEST ATHENS SEABEES CONDUCT SURVEY AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY. PLEASE ADVISE.

6. WE ASSUME THAT LOCAL PRESS REPS WILL SOON LEARN THAT EMBASSY HAS RECOVERED VEHICLE. IF ASKED ABOUT IT, WE INTEND TO ACKNOWLEDGE WE HAVE CAR AND HAVE NOTHING FURTHER TO SAY ABOUT IT. THIS POSITION WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME UNTENABLE, HOWEVER, AND WILL LEAD TO SPECULATION THAT MAY BE HARMFUL. WHATEVER WE SAY, THERE WILL INEVITABLY BE RENEWAL OF TALK ABOUT MELOY ASSASSINATION AND EFFORTS TO FIND CULPRITS.

7. WE REQUEST DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE. WE SUGGEST LINE BE SOMETHING AS FOLLOWS: VEHICLE HAD BEEN HIDDEN IN BEIRUT AND WAS RECOVERED AS RESULT CONTACTS BETWEEN EMBASSY AND GOL AND BETWEEN RSO AND PLO SECURITY PERSONNEL. VEHICLE IS NOW BEING EXAMINED AND APPEARS TO BE UNDAMAGED. PARKER

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